THE
RECONSTRUCTIONIST

DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM AS A RELIGIOUS CIVILIZATION, TO THE UPBUILDING OF ISRAEL'S ANCIENT HOMELAND, AND TO THE FURTHERANCE OF UNIVERSAL FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND PEACE.

Vol. IV. May 6, 1938 Iyar 5, 5698 No. 6

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EDITORIALS

Needed—A Constitutional Jubilee Year

IT is now a little more than a year since the country was subjected to a barrage of reactionary propaganda which kept reiterating that President Roosevelt in his attempt to enlarge the Supreme Court was striking a blow at "the guardian of our Constitution." It mattered little that the President in his proposals acted within the framework of the Constitution and that he did not ask Congress in any way to flout the Constitution. When it suited the plutocrats of the country, for their own selfish ends, to put a crimp in the orderly process of democracy, they proceeded to surround the Supreme Court with an aura of divine wisdom and impartiality, and by imputing sinister motives to the President, succeeded in winning Congress to their side.

However, the discussion over the Supreme Court that was thereby stimulated in the press and over the radio served a good purpose. The public received a much-needed educational lesson in an important phase of their political history, while the Supreme Court, sensing a more informed and more aroused public opinion, began to hand down "surprisingly liberal" decisions.

The recent defeat of the President's Reorganization Bill, too, while manifestly having for its real purpose to discredit the New Deal and President Roosevelt personally, served nevertheless to educate large sections of the population as to the true nature of their government—who were the real enemies of democracy and the real dictators behind the political scene.

Since the claim to be "defending the Constitution and the Supreme Court" against usurpers and dictators is now the stock-in-trade of all reactionaries, fascists and professional patriots generally, it would be well if a popular campaign were started agitating for a constitutional amendment calling for periodic Constitutional Conventions, say, once in fifty years.

In New York State a Constitutional Convention is now in session charged by the voters with the task of drafting a new State Constitution, to be submitted to the people for ratification. The last time the people went to the polls in New York State to accept or reject the proposals of the Constitutional Convention was in 1915. The new Constitution was then rejected, but as a by-product of that convention the electorate were educated as to the form and content of their Constitution, and subsequent years saw the enactment of a number of bills that had emerged from that convention.

It might be equally salutary if we agitated for a periodic revision of the Federal Constitution through the establishment of a Constitutional Jubilee Year,

when the country with its institutions once again reverted to the people who inhabit it, so that they might revise their Constitution in the light of new facts and new conditions. We need constantly to hammer away at the thought that the Constitution, to paraphrase an old Rabbinic dictum, was made for man, and not man for the Constitution.

Considering the present encumbrances in the way of passing an amendment to the Federal Constitution, we have no illusions about our ability to append such an amendment at an early date. But we think that agitation for such an amendment would serve to puncture the inflated pretensions of the plutocrats and their henchmen on the one hand, and would also serve to educate the citizens of the country to the fact that the ultimate power to make changes in the laws of the country rests with them and not with the Constitution or the Supreme Court. This would be a democratic step toward a more genuine democracy, which word, by its very etymology, means "the rule of the people."

Planned Economy vs. Socially-Planned Economy

IN the last fifteen months we have been treated to a number of object lessons as to how the "economic royalists" of our country operate to prevent people from utilizing the process of political democracy to attain a greater measure of economic democracy. Through their manipulation of the press and the radio which they control, these reactionary elements let loose a persistent barrage of vituperation and misrepresentation with reference to the advanced legislation sponsored by President Roosevelt. They constantly referred to the Child Labor Amendment as the "Youth Control Act," and they defeated the Reorganization Bill, a beneficent measure on the whole, which would have helped make the Government administration more efficient and less costly, by stigmatizing it as a "Dictatorship Bill." Likewise such a project as the T.V.A. is evaluated not for its influence in raising the standard of living of great masses of our people and in emancipating them from domination by private interests, but as a project that is furthering "bureaucratic government control."

The method of attack in each case (an expert technique of propaganda) is to fasten a false and odious label on the particular legislative or administrative measure and then to oppose it as an act of "patriotic duty" for the defense of "our liberties." In this way, true democracy is traduced and reaction scores a triumph.

We are particularly concerned with exposing this technique because, as the crisis continues to deepen, the more enlightened among the people will inevitably turn to thoughts of economic planning, and it is precisely at this point that reactionaries wax eloquent against the evils of a "planned economy."

What is the crucial question with reference to planning? In order to plan economically on a national scale, we must answer the question: For what kind of economy are we going to plan? If our aim is to perpetuate the profit system, then our economic planning will take the form of planning artificial scarcity through curtailing production. For, since foreign markets for capitalistic exploitation are lacking, unless we resort to war to capture some other nation's markets, increased production at home, so-called "overproduction" tends to lower prices and reduce profits. If our aim is to bolster up dwindling profits for the few, then economic planning must take the form of restricted production or scarcity in both industry and agriculture. The short-lived AAA and certain features of the NRA were steps in this direction.

However, if we are going to plan increased consumption of goods for the masses instead of increased profits for the few, if our planning is to be for social instead of selfish ends, then we must plan to pro-

duce abundance. Such a planned economy is a *Socially Planned Economy.* A socially planned economy has two main tasks, viz: to utilize the available equipment in machinery, technology and manpower to produce abundance, and then to distribute income or purchasing power so as to insure effective demand by the masses of the people.

Unlike most European nations, our country is blessed with sufficient natural, technological and human resources to feed, clothe and shelter every man, woman and child in decency, security and comfort. There is no need for poverty and unemployment here if we can only plan our social economy wisely, if we can provide for a planned abundance.

Two Views on Partition

1. IN FAVOR OF PARTITION

By HERBERT PARZEN*

ZIONISTS and non-Zionists alike, "Ja-Zagers" and "Nein-Zagers," in both camps, are conscientious in their viewpoints. They argue their case earnestly and with considered conviction. This cannot be gainsaid and need not be questioned.

There is, however, one argument for the proposed partition of Palestine that is decisive and worthy of detailed formulation.

The Jewish State, once established as a political sovereignty, will have its future in its own hands. It will be able to adopt and to pursue a program of its own choice to its logical conclusion. The development of the community will proceed, whether for ill or for good, in accordance with the will of the Yishub. The State will function solely in the interests of its own people. In other words, the State as a sovereign instrumentality, will assure its citizens that their direct interests are paramount, just as other small states do. The recent Polish-Lithuanian quarrel is a case in point. Lithuania decided to submit to the Polish ultimatum because she was convinced that submission was in the best interests of her people.

True, powerful pressure induced her government to accede to the wishes of Poland. Foreign powers exerted their diplomatic prestige, their political influence and their economic preponderance to affect a rapprochment. Foreign powers exercised as much pressure to win concessions from Poland. Finally Lithuania capitulated; but Poland softened her demands to make it possible for Lithuania to save her face. I repeat, however, that the capitulation of Lithuania was essentially in her own interests, and these vital interests dictated the decision. If the well-being of Lithuania demanded war, it may be readily assumed that the ultimatum would have been rejected. The destiny of Lithuania was in the hands of the Lithuanians; and her intrinsic interests, in the final analysis, decided the issue. This is the specific need of the Yishub—to be in a position to control and to guide its own life.

No one can deny the fact that the principal weakness and hindrance in our work in Palestine during the Mandate era (and certainly before that) has been Palestine's dependence upon the will and the whim of others. Policy has been determined, on the whole, by considerations other than Jewish. The story of Palestine building has been a series of compromises, if not sacrifices, of Jewish interests. The severing of Transjordania, the progressive restriction of land purchase, the immigration policy, the disposition of state lands, and inequities in government subsidies to welfare and educational institutions are a few pointed examples.

The Jewish State will certainly correct this procedure. Jewish interests alone will

*Rabbi, Freeport, L. I.

determine state policy. Whether 100,000 Jews will enter Palestine annually during the first 20 years of statehood, as Dr. Weizmann predicts, or whether Palestine will absorb an annual immigration of 12,000 as at present under the political high level doctrine, will be fixed by conditions inherent in the existing economy, and in the will of the Jewish State.

Under the Mandate, however, political purposes unrelated to Palestine Jewry have largely determined the annual immigration quota. Thus the political high level, the new yardstick for Jewish immigration, established immediately after the publication of the Peel Report, is entirely and admittedly a political instrumentality to reduce the tempo of growth and the size of the Yishub.

The same holds true for the idea of the economic absorptive capacity of the land. Properly appraised and impartially fixed this is an altogether just barometer. But it has hardly ever been properly appraised and impartially fixed. Political considerations of the British Empire, unconnected with Palestine economy, decided, on the whole, what constituted the absorptive capacity. Certainly the absorptive capacity of the established Jewish State is a moot question. Beyond debate, however, is the fact that Jewish concerns will wholly determine the immigration policy, and that policy will not be knocked into a cocked hat by irrelevant issues.

Moreover, this principle of self-determination is also applicable to the Arab-Jewish problem. It has arisen because of several factors. In the first place we must recognize that a struggle for supremacy, however disguised, between the two nationalities prevails in the land. The Arabs insist upon retaining their majority position; the Jews want to become the majority as quickly as possible. Hence the clash of interests. Upon the interplay of forces British imperial policy impinges, primarily for the purpose of keeping both peoples within set limits and also of reducing the restiveness of the Moslem population in the Empire. British interests dictate British policy in Palestine. It cannot be otherwise. We must be sufficiently realistic to understand the motivation of government. Utopia is still far off. States act to conserve and to protect their own interests. This is the first principle of statecraft. It is neither sinister nor Machiavellian; it is natural and normal. There is no use decrying British imperialism. It ill becomes us to expose British selfishness and exploitation of subject races. Fantastic attacks upon British foreign policy, irresponsibly made, will not solve our problem; nor will espousing the cause of the restive populations in the Empire help Palestine rebuilding. We must accept the thesis that where and when British interests clash with those of Palestine, or with those of Jewish Palestine, the first become paramount by the very nature of the situation. We must understand and expect such procedure. I reiterate, British interests quite naturally determine British policy in Palestine.

When the Mediterranean crisis arose, Italian propaganda among Arabs against Britain, and Mussolini's pose as the defender of Islam brought the rivalry of the two European powers into Palestine. The Arabs were intrigued and aroused by Fascist promises. The result has been unrest, strife and rebellion with consequent insecurity to life and property.

Let us attempt to visualize Arab-Jewish relations under the Jewish State. Both peoples will be faced with a *fait accompli.* Only war will be able to alter the status quo. Even Arab leaders will of necessity realize that the conquest of the Jewish State will be no simple child's play. Bedouin raids may continue for a time, but such a policy will damage the Arabs as much as the Jews. Sooner or later a rapprochement will be reached and appeasement will follow.

As for the Jews, even if military action will be required as a defense against invasion, the State will not be endangered. Even wars come to an end, followed by peace. In a negotiated peace, even after a war, cooperation between the two states must ensue. The important fact stands

out that Jewish life in the Jewish State will be moulded by Jewish statesmanship in the interests of the Jewish population.

I believe, however, that the enlightened and even the selfish interests of Jews and Arabs alike will compel decent and dignified relations. For it will no longer be a question of cooperation between two peoples competing for dominance in one area; it will be a matter of international negotiation. If it will be to the advantage of both states, as I believe it will, to establish their affairs on a helpful, neighborly basis, peace must sooner or later come. The forces working for survival, safety and well-being will enforce peace. These forces, overpowering foreign interference, will dictate Arab-Jewish relations. Therefore within a reasonable period of time this problem will be solved—as it cannot be under present circumstances, with foreign powers using it for its nuisance value to prick the British nervous system.

The value of the Jewish State looms even larger in the field of international politics. The international situation is fluid and unstable; it is dominated by a legion of prejudices and ulterior motives. No one can predict whether it will produce war or peace. In either instance, I hold, a Jewish State is the best guarantee for the Yishub. For one thing, the state, by reason of its very nature, will not be a cat's paw in international arrangements. It will have something to say about its own existence and destiny.

With the League of Nations a lifeless skeleton, it is quite conceivable that, in the absence of a Jewish State, England, to secure her paramount interests, might eventually decide to cast Palestine adrift or barter it to some Mediterranean power for considerations that she may regard as supreme and vital to her existence. Impossible? Nothing is impossible in this era of political instability and revolutionary readjustment.

As a matter of fact, the Anglo-Italian negotiations include Palestine. In these negotiations and dickerings the Jews and Arabs are altogether ignored. Palestine and its people have no voice in the international position of their country. It is quite possible that Italy intends to continue to fish in the murky waters of the Palestine problem and to use it for its nuisance value whenever she is inclined to resume twisting the British lion's tail.

And if the future bring forth a European war, the Jewish status in Palestine, under the present regime, would definitely be jeopardized. The whirlpool of prejudices, motives, interests, intrigues and passions would engulf the concerns of the Jews in Palestine. Who can tell what the fate of Palestine would be? Certainly the Yishub under the present arrangement would have little to say concerning its disposition. The Powers at the diplomatic peace conference would dispose of the land to suit their own purposes. It is safe to assume that British needs, in the end, would determine who should be Palestine's master. No one can expect, nor should we expect, England to have scruples that would outweigh her own well-being.

On the other hand, with the existence of a Jewish State, its territory may be conquered but it cannot be given away without consulting the wishes of its citizens. Peoples are no longer exiled. They may be made tributary but not dispersed and dispossessed. The recognition of conquest would have to be attested by the signature of Jewish statesmen. The Yishub, under a Jewish State, will be irrevocably bound up with its territory.

If mankind somehow muddles through the future without recourse to war, a Jewish State is the only assurance that Jewish Palestine will remain Jewish. For it cannot be auctioned away to serve the vital interests of others. That part of Palestine which will constitute the Jewish State will be at the disposal of Jewish statesmanship—and of none other.

For these reasons I believe that the idea of self-determination, once acknowledged as valid, becomes a determining factor in favoring Partition for the sake of an immediate Jewish sovereign State.

2. AGAINST PARTITION

By Max Weine*

THE Jewish world is generally opposed to the partition of Palestine—regarding that there is little doubt. We feel that historically the Jews are entitled to the whole of that land that is associated with the hopes and destiny of the Jewish people.

An additional factor, though not so obvious and not so often articulated, refers to our relations with the Arabs. Throughout the history of our effort to rebuild the homeland we have always insisted that the Arabs are our racial cousins, that we will build the land together for our mutual good, and that our common interest demands that we cooperate in the project of making Palestine a fruitful oasis in the Near Eastern desert. For us to concede at the present time that cooperation is impossible, that the ambitions of these two peoples in Palestine are irreconcilable, would not only be surrendering to the interests of Great Britain as expressed in the report of the Royal Commission, but would be an admission of the baselessness of one of the fundamental moral arguments for the Zionist movement.

There is one other aspect in the present Palestine situation, however, that is persistently soft-pedalled, especially by Zionists, namely, the question of British imperialism and the attitude of Zionism to it. This is, perhaps, the weakest point, ideologically, in Zionist thought, the one where we are most vulnerable, and where we have been attacked most ferociously. Unless we can clear ourselves of the charge of aiding and abetting British imperialism in Palestine, our movement will not only suffer from an inner contradiction in theory, but also stand the chance of losing the support and sympathy of an ever-growing force in world public opinion that sees in imperialism one of the greatest threats to world peace and to the ultimate aims of civilization.

It is hardly necessary to repeat here the part that imperialism has played and plays at the present time in world politics. It is basically the cause of war, of oppression of nationalities, of exploitation and enslavement of the defenseless. It is, in short, the major force of reaction working in collusion with the growing menace of fascism, and has for years been hiding beneath the delusive title of "manifest destiny" (American version), or "the white man's burden" (British version). What Great Britain has been doing in India is a case in point.

The mention of India should serve as a significant example with reference to what we are doing in Palestine. The situation of the Hindoos is analogous to that of the Arabs in many respects. Both are oppressed and exploited by a ruling class of their own nationality assisted by a class of British officialdom. In both countries the British manage to hold the upper hand by a policy of divide and rule, in the one case by antagonizing different religious groups against each other, and in the other by setting the Arabs against the Jews. In both countries there is a rising nationalist movement emanating from the broad masses of the population. In India it is already advanced and within grasp of freedom, while in Palestine it is still in an embryo state, suppressed by the spurious nationalism of Arab officialdom and grasping Arab effendis who are remote from the real interests of the mass of their compatriots.

The position of the Jews in Palestine, it is charged, incidentally fosters the progress of British imperialism. The Balfour Declaration was granted to us fundamentally as one link in a chain of war promises made without regard for logic or consistency, with the obvious aim of gaining Jewish support in the winning of a war

*Rabbi, Rutland, Vt.

the fruits of which would be the aggrandizement of the victorious powers. At the Peace Conference the conquered world was again fought over by the winning powers, Palestine going to the British as a vital link in her chain of communications with the Orient. The San Remo decision which definitely gave the Palestine mandate to Great Britain "smelled of oil." The position of the Jews in Palestine was regarded with favor by the British as an assurance of the presence of a friendly people that would cooperate with the mandatory in case of a crisis. The entire policy of Great Britain with reference to immigration, internal policy, and Arab-Jewish relations can thus be logically interpreted in the light of British imperialistic aims. The increased strategic importance of Palestine in view of the Italian conquest of Abyssinia and the heightened significance of aerial warfare is too obvious to require detailed analysis.

The Jews, according to this theory, are thus being utilized as a convenient tool in the strengthening of British imperialism. Presumably looking out for our own salvation and hypnotized by the mellifluous pronouncements of British imperialists, we are gradually being enmeshed in the web of world politics and world tensions that are bound to snap and result in another world war of greater dimensions and of a more destructive nature than the first. By being loyal to our benefactors, the British mandatory, by cooperating with them and looking up to them for justice we are merely being made the cat's paw of a process that in other connections we are most vehement in condemning.

If our efforts in Palestine are based on justice and right, if the movement of peaceful colonization of our homeland is to remain clean and unsullied by this force of reaction which we are in fact abetting, if we are to continue to speak in the name of a higher morality in the furtherance of our efforts in Palestine, we must once and for all extricate ourselves from this dilemma and take a definite attitude with regard to our relation to British imperialism. If our movement on whose banner are emblazoned the rights of nationalities, justice to a maligned people deprived of its homeland, liberalism and freedom, is to be realized only with the help of British cannon and airplanes, at the price of exploiting and suppressing another nationalist movement, then the price is indeed too high to pay. If our national longings are to be obtained at the cost of damaging our own sense of right, our own liberal attitudes with regard to the alignment of world forces, then perhaps the reward is not worth the effort.

But perhaps the situation is otherwise. May it not be possible to free ourselves from the charge of aiding British imperialism and continue our work on a different basis, one that will free us from this charge and will liberate these hitherto suppressed longings?

Before we can do this there is one thing we must make clear to ourselves and to the world at large, namely, that Jews began migrating to Palestine with the intention of building a national home there long before the war and long before British imperialism entrenched itself there. The fact that they went to Palestine was not a matter of choice but one of historic necessity. Any other place on earth, however favorable, would have been no more than a place of refuge, and of those we have had many in the course of our history. Only in Palestine could the Jews work out their destiny as a people and regain the lost sense of continuity with the past. The fact that Palestine was destined to be the locus of British imperialism or any other imperialism is something that the Jews could not reckon with objectively. Palestine was their home through historic association and to it they would return. Does the fact that the Balkans are always overrun and crisscrossed by the conflicting imperialisms of European powers make them any less a home for the Greeks, Serbians, Bulgarians, etc.? Does the fact that the various

empires have been cutting up China for themselves mean that China is any the less a home for the Chinese?

The essential point to be considered is not our right to be in Palestine but rather our attitude to the policies of the British now that we are there. Are we doing everything possible to divorce our activities there from the imperialistic aims of Great Britain? Are we in any way resisting that force, at least in so far as it affects our work in the land? That is what we must make clear to ourselves and to the world. The Jews should at all times avoid doing anything that will in the least identify their cause with that of British imperialism. They should resist that force at least ideologically by opposing any measures that are guided by those interests. The partition of Palestine is a case in point.

It is to the interest of Great Britain to assert, as she does throughout the report of the Royal Commission, that the interests of the Jews and the Arabs are irreconcilable, thus preparing the ground for partition and for a foothold in Palestine which she could not legally obtain under the terms of the mandate. This she must do in order to protect her line of communication there, especially after the granting of independence to Egypt and the intrusion of Italy into Abyssinia.

Are the interests of the Jews and the Arabs irreconcilable? Before the granting of the Balfour Declaration Jews immigrated into the land, established colonies, bought land from the Arabs, etc., and there was no serious opposition from the Arabs, no disturbances and no boycotts. If not for the incidence of the war, we could very safely conceive of the Jews infiltrating into Palestine, cooperating with the Arabs in developing the land, raising the standard of living, eliminating disease and illiteracy and in general building their common home. Cooperation between these two peoples is not only desirable but quite possible. The fact is that we have never given it very much more than lip service. Cooperation means that Jewish and Arab masses must do everything to make their home serve their needs and wants: that Jewish and Arab labor have a common battle against economic exploitation and for a higher standard of living: that Arabs must be made to realize that their feudal lords are using them as tools to further selfish ends just as the British are using the Jews to protect their markets and their communications: that both parties can live together in the land and develop their cultural, social and national institutions in friendly cooperation: that it is just as important to unionize Arabs as Jews and just as essential to raise the standard of living of one group as of another: and that the economic development of the land, of industries, and of commerce must be for the common benefit of Jews and Arabs.

That the Jews are in no way depriving the Arabs of land, livelihood or opportunities can be easily attested by the fact that, generally speaking, very few Arabs have suffered from sale of land to Jews, and these cases are more or less incidental to the necessary process of development from a crude feudal economy to a more industrialized society and an intensified form of agriculture. Moreover, the fact that Palestine is a land of Arab as well as Jewish immigration is sufficient indication that it is a "going concern" and that no part of the population is being deprived of "hearth and home."

A deeper consideration of the above sketchy analysis will show that the plan for the partition of Palestine is but another—and the most outstanding and crucial—scheme to advance the interests of British imperialism, and should be opposed if only on this score. The fact that it breaks up the historic and economic unity of the country, that it greatly limits the field for Jewish colonization, that a number of successful colonies and Jewish enterprises find themselves outside of the Jewish segment, and other such considerations, though of inestimable importance to us, are of secondary consideration. We

can argue on such a basis for selfish reasons, but when we oppose division on the ground that it is an imperialistic disruption of every chance for unity and cooperation with the Arabs, we have a broader and more far-reaching principle to defend.

What can we do about it? At the present moment we can certainly do nothing to resist British imperialism effectively. The fascist colossus of Rome and the military clique of Japan could successfully challenge Great Britain; but what, after all, can the Jews do? Forceful opposition would be suicide. Social and economic revolution in Palestine would be equally hazardous, and world revolution, which according to Marxian theory would do away with the economic rivalry which makes for imperialism, is a millennial dream even according to the most orthodex believers. *'Bis der moshiach vet kummen ken noch die neshomeh arois"* is a familiar Yiddish saying and very applicable in this case. We cannot do anything that will lead to certain self-destruction. The cry among Jews for a haven of refuge for both body and soul grows ever greater. We must concentrate our time and energy in constructive work, in bringing Jews into Palestine and building the land. We have been doing this with the conviction that justice is on our side, and we have won the sympathy and support of important elements of public opinion on that score. But we must also at the present time strain every nerve to retain justice as the basis of our work.

British imperialism ultimately must go from Palestine as from the rest of the world. At least it must be radically modified so as to allow for the free and untrammelled development of subject peoples. Meanwhile what? We must continue to build Palestine under the aegis of Great Britain, but we must take special pains to convince the Arabs, not only by word but also by deed, that we are not agents of British imperialism. We must convince them that, far from wanting to drive them out, we are coming to build together the land that history has in a sense given to both of us; that it is not a question of mine or thine, but of both groups working out their salvation socially, economically, culturally, and perhaps ultimately, politically. If we can but make the Arabs understand this, perhaps they will also learn to understand that they too are being oppressed, not by Jews, but by grasping Arab effendis who, on the one hand are holding them in a state of feudal backwardness, exploiting them and robbing them, and, on the other hand, are afraid of the oncoming industrial civilization being introduced by the Jews and by Great Britain which will work for their destruction. If the Arabs rebel, it should not be against the Jews but rather against the benighted muftis and religious reactionaries, against the absentee landlords leading riotous lives in Cairo and Paris cafes.

Our stand, in other words, should be with the Arab masses. We are both alike inhabitants of the land, and our work and our destiny should be a common one. If we cannot do anything effectively to oppose British imperialism, we can at least free ourselves ideologically from the charge of furthering it, by opposing its strategy at every point, and clearly pointing out that we are not in the least using it as a prop, as a means to an end, but are concentrating on our task of rebuilding the land, together with the Arabs.

If we meet with success in this effort, we will also free ourselves of another anomalous situation in Zionist thought. The question of a democratic legislative assembly has always been an embarrassing one to Zionists. We Jews, who always speak in the name of democracy, are brought to the pass where we oppose its introduction in our own homeland. We will, of course, agree when we are a majority; in other words, when we can be sure that democracy will be in our favor. Is there anything more undemocratic than that? All this has been brought about by the machinations of British imperial-

ism. With the Jews and the Arabs on unfriendly terms, with the fear prevalent among the Arabs that we are depriving them of their land, with Jews feeling unsafe until they have a majority of the population, any attempt at democracy would be a sham. And both the Arabs and the Jews have effectively boycotted every attempt at its introduction. But with the two peoples living in friendly cooperation, what is there to fear? The question of relative population will necessarily recede into the background. Immigration will be welcome as long as there is economic opportunity. Then, as in Switzerland, "the community of interest or tradition which has supplied the motive for union will also supply the element of reasonableness and goodwill by which compromises may be arranged and friction overcome." Naturally the absence of these conditions in Palestine is deplored by the Royal Commission (p. 378).

By building up this realization of common destiny, the inhabitants of Palestine will be able to offer at least effective passive resistance to British imperialism. The case of India is again analogous. India never declared war against Great Britain. But she accomplished a good deal and is definitely on the road to national unity and freedom through the means of passive resistance. Jews and Arabs in Palestine are in number certainly no comparison to the millions of inhabitants of India. But the Arabs have millions of their coreligionists in the Near East and in India who will back them up, and the Jews have the sympathy and backing of millions of their coreligionists. Are these not forces to be reckoned with? And will they not have the sympathy of countless millions of other British subjects in India and elsewhere? The process will, of course, be a slow and painful one. But there is one consolation: both the Jews and the Arabs will be fighting for a cause that will be considered unjust and subversive only by the protagonists of world imperialisms.

Our aim to rebuild Palestine as our national homeland draws its strength not only from the dire need for a haven of refuge, but also from the idealism of the prophets. If Palestine is to take a step forward toward the realization of a messianic world, then "Zion shall be redeemed with justice." This is the only way.

Nationalism and The Class Struggle

By Emanuel Green*

THE growth of the Palestinian labor movement to its present proportions makes it rather difficult to realize that it was achieved in our own generation. The volume** under review brings it startlingly to our attention when we realize that its founder would be only fifty-seven years old, if he were living today.

I

The movement for labor Palestine may be said to have begun with the founding of the Poale Zion party, at the Poltava Conference, under difficulties of which Borochov has left us the following interesting reminiscences: "The conference began on the eve of Purim in 1906 at Poltava in the presence of thirty delegates. Meetings were held under cover in the small room of a Jewish bakery

*Rabbi, Aurora, Ill.

**_Nationalism and the Class Struggle_, a from the Yiddish; introduction by Abraham lected writings by Ber Borochov translated from the Yiddish; introduction by Abraham G. Duker, Poale Zion-Zeire Zion and Young Poale Zion Alliance, New York, 1937. 205 p. $1.50.

on the outskirts of the city. For seven days and nights we sat and slept there, not taking a step outside for fear the Czarist police would notice us." Yet, in spite of these precautions, some were apprehended.

One of the comrades who was with Borochov at that gathering gives us an interesting delineation of the man. "He was the soul of the conference; only twenty-six years of age but possessed of great erudition. He commanded eight languages and had a phenomenal capacity for work. He read all the important 'papers,' but because of his modesty, he insisted that others should read 'papers,' too. He would, however, raise a point in the discussion and we could sit for hours and hours watching his nervous face as he lit one cigarette after another . . . and we swallowed his Torah." (Der Roiter Pinkos, p. 146.)

What was his Torah? It was an attempt at interpreting Jewish life from a materialistic conception of history, but the intensity of his personality animated it to such an extent that all who came under his influence became his *talmidim* and he a *Rebbe* dispensing a new Torah. I think that the following questions and answers will summarize his teaching and will focus our attention on the core of his analysis:

1. Why do Jews migrate?

Because they are now excluded from the primary industries and, with the accelerated growth of technology, they will be displaced from even secondary position which they hold at the present time, forcing them to leave. Migrate they must! The question is, where? As conscious socialists who want to participate in the coming class struggle the Jewish workers must seek a strategic base for this eventuality.

2. Where can such a place be found?

In Palestine. Why? Because it is a semi-developed country "where petty Jewish capital and labor may be utilized . . . and the country will have no attraction for immigrants from other nations. Big capital will hardly find use for itself there, while Jewish petty and middle class capital will find a market for its products . . . in both that country and its environs. The land of spontaneously concentrated Jewish immigration will be Palestine." Natural, "stychic" forces are driving us to Palestine where Jewish workers will be in a position to enter primary industries.

3. But where does the class struggle enter into the picture?

From the very first moment that the Jewish entrepreneur and the Jewish worker meet, their class antagonisms will assert themselves; with this advantage, that Jewish worker will be occupying a normal strategic base for joining his fellow workers throughout the world in this conflict.

4. Does it all make sense? Go to Palestine to rear an economic structure which will have to be conquered by the class struggle?

Yes. In fact, there is no choice. Jewish masses will be forced to go to Palestine and the class struggle exists wherever capitalist and worker meet.

The above is a brief formulation of Borochov's early diagnosis of the Jewish problem. His emphasis was on the economic interpretation to the complete exclusion of other factors. He goes out of his way to assure us that "ours is a realistic nationalism, free from any 'spiritual' admixture"; and in another place, "The subjective motivation of our program flows solely from the class interests of the Jewish proletariat."

This opinion of Borochov has since been challenged by other leaders in the movement, notably by Ezekiel Kaufman who takes the position that the need for Palestine grows out of our particular Jewish history and is as great for the bourgeoisie as it is for the working class. In fact, "The Jewish proletariat as a class felt no need for an immigration to Palestine. A majority of the workers were opposed to Zionism. In large numbers they migrated to America and not to Erez Yisrael." (*Behevle hazman,* p. 131.)

In order to understand Borochov, we must know something of the intellectual

environment in which he lived and labored. A close examination of the two Yiddish volumes of his writings shows that more than half is devoted to polemics with other groups. Abraham G. Duker's rather lengthy introduction is justified. He gives a competent and most comprehensive picture of the disputes of the period without which the book can not be understood. The introduction is, therefore, a summary, but at the same time, an integral part of the text itself. The choice of title for the book was a happy one. It mirrors the theoretical concern with the question of nationalism that was prevalent in that period.

II

Socialist thinking was cosmopolitan in its outlook and demanded the sacrifice of nationalism at its altar. But in the case of the Jewish people it went further; there was even no need for immolation, the lamb having died of fright before it was brought to the altar. There is no such thing as a Jewish nationality! Proof? Thus said Saint Karl: Money is the jealous God of Israel and the caste that worships him will disappear with the capitalist system. This "proof" was accepted by socialist thinkers, uncritically. Even a man like A. Lieberman whom Borochov calls "the founder of Jewish socialism" denied the existence of a Jewish people and wrote: "We Jews do not possess a culture of our own which differentiates and isolates us from the nations among whom we live. . . . Any bond which may have ever existed betwen us has long been torn asunder." In the prospectus to the first Jewish socialist publication, *Ha-emet,* he did use the word "nationality" but hastened to defend himself by writing, ". . . Not the love of nationality induces us to publish this journal . . . only the love of humanity, the love of the children of our people as human beings, and their terrible sufferings, impel us to tell them in their own language the *Emet.*" (Buchbinder, Die Geschichte fun der Yiddisher Arbeiter Bevegung in Russland, p. 44.)

In the famous dispute between the *Bund* and the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party on the question of Jewish nationality, which led to the withdrawal of the *Bund* delegation from the 1903 London meeting, Lenin wrote that the idea of a Jewish "nationality" has a definitely reactionary character; and even as late as 1913 he wrote that the "Jews in the civilized world are not a nation; they have become almost assimilated. . . . The Jews in Galicia and Russia are not a nation; they unfortunately . . . are still a caste." (Quoted in the Duker Introduction.)

We have traveled a long way since then and we may have difficulty in realizing the herculean task that faced the young man of twenty-six who wanted to create a synthesis between a socialist cosmopolitan outlook and Jewish survival. He had to use a terminology that would appeal to his contemporaries who were bewildered by the question. Perhaps no clearer picture could be drawn of this bewilderment than by quoting from a letter of a leading socialist. "It is impossible for a revolutionary to solve the Jewish problem in a practical way. What can be done by revolutionaries in places where Jews are attacked? To defend them would mean to arouse the hostility of the peasants against the revolutionaries. It is bad enough that they killed the Czar; yet in addition they are defending the *Zhids.* The revolutionaries are faced with two contradictions. It is simply a situation without an escape, both for the Jews and for the revolutionaries. . . . Do not think that I was not embittered and faced by a dilemma. Nevertheless I shall always remain a member of the Russian Revolutionary Party and will not leave it even for one day, because this contradiction, the same as many others, was not created by the Party."

While true that the contradiction was not created by the Party, it must nevertheless be emphasized that such an approach meant doing simply nothing for the Jewish problem; and thus, ignoring a

situation which *did exist,* and demanded a solution. One is tempted to say that such an approach was very un-Marxian on the part of those who boasted that their Marxism led them to look *realistically* at all problems. More than that, in terms of Marxist theory of that period, Borochov had to use a materialistic interpretation, which does not fit Jewish history. Some of the absurdities of his formulation can be traced directly to the Marxian *Shulhan Arukh;* but we must evaluate it in terms of the period in which it was written. It is to Borochov's credit that he was able to extricate himself from this confusion and to arrive at a more mature formulation which included other factors of Jewish history, such as the feeling of kinship which is associated with a common historical past, the group character of our people and, above all, the *will* to remain an entity and not to assimilate.

Let us quote at some length from an article he wrote in 1915 which shows Borochov as a mature thinker, and is, at the same time, one of the finest formulations of the Jewish will to survive: "Death and suicide are the most radical reliefs from disease. Similarly, assimilation is the most radical solution to the Jewish problem. If there were no Jews there would be no suffering from the Jewish tragedy. Nevertheless, no medical expert would advise his patient to take poison for a cure. No honest statesman or idealist ever attempted to solve, for example, the Polish question by suggesting that the Polish people should cease existing. And how would the Belgians, in their present plight, look upon anyone who gave them the excellent advice to assimilate with the Germans, and cease to exist as an independent nation?

"Only to us Jews have self-appointed 'physicians' had the audacity, the shamelessness, to preach national suicide. It is beneath the honor and the dignity of our great heroic and martyred people to take the assimilationist Utopianists seriously. The Jewish nation *lives* and *will* live! Other nations may love us or hate us, but they will never succeed in wiping us out, either by persecution or by assimilation.

"Nevertheless, were assimilation possible, we might have considered it. The truth of the matter is, however, that assimilation is nothing more than a harmful illusion. The Jewish masses become assimilated only to some degree. At most, they accept the *external characteristics* of the neighboring nations; the clothes, the language, certain foods, and habits. But inwardly, in their spirit, they remain strange to the culture of their neighbors. Even the most assimilated Jews cannot intermingle with their neighbors, and always lead a distinct Jewish life.

"As long as other nations exist, the Jewish nation will also exist. A part of the Jewish intelligentzia and upper bourgeoisie strenuously attempts to commit national suicide, but the Jewish masses, the Jewish working class, will not yield to the notion that the Jews disappear among foreign nations and alien cultures."

Thus do we see in Borochov the growth in the thinking of Jewish labor from 1906 to 1915. He died in 1917 and events have moved swiftly since then, but many Jewish workers have not caught up with them; and here and there one will still find discussions about Jewish nationality conducted on the ABC level. They could read with profit this volume. Will they?

III

That this slender volume is more than a *likute amarim* of Borochov is due to judicious editing, the utilization of all available printing space, the use of small, yet readable type, and the liberal sprinkling of notes which will prove very helpful. Moreover, together with the introduction, it is a fairly good book on Jewish sociology.

The fact that the text is not lucid and in parts heavy, is inherent in a translation of this nature, unless it is done by a person of creative linguistic ability.

The lack of an index will not deter anyone from reading it, but will prove a

hindrance to one who wishes to use it as reference material.

IV

What remains of Borochov today? While much of his analysis is outmoded, I would maintain that his central thesis has assumed added validity in our own day. The doors of America and of other countries are closed to Jewish migration. The Jewish middle class is losing ground everywhere and Palestine is its only hope. The word *Aliyah* was used in the Biblical text for those who went from Egypt to Canaan, now we use it to denote waves of immigration. I should like to suggest a third usage. Palestine is the only place in the world where it has become possible for a middle class Jew to become a proletarian without losing his status in the community, and, what is even more important, in his own eyes. He is not a *yored* but an *oleh;* he is not a person who has been forced out of the middle class and is seeking an avenue of escape, he is a worker who is proud of it. That is an *aliyah* (ascent) in the finest sense.

The Histadrut is the most important institution, or rather series of institutions, in Palestine today. It has been able to weather the unprecedented storm for the past year and a half because its foundations are deeply rooted in the soil of reality.

We have been able to bring almost half a million people to a new land without the use of an army or navy, and even without the power to levy a tax. The contributions of Jews in the diaspora, though they may seem large in the aggregate, represent an almost negligible proportion of their income. This is shown in an interesting article by Abraham Sharon (*Moznaim, Tammuz-av,* 1937) in which he gives the following figures which may be questioned in detail but not in their general import. For the past 15 years, the Jews of the donating countries have had an annual income of 4 billion dollars. This would make a total of 60 billion dollars. How much have they given for Palestine? Only .00025 per cent for the Keren Hayesod and the Keren Kayemet and, even if we include private investments, only .0083 per cent. Under these circumstances, the settlement in Palestine of half a million people is perhaps the greatest achievement of modern times; Mussolini can conquer an Ethiopia but cannot force people to settle there. The moral fibre which has made possible all this was first woven by Borochov at the Poltava Conference of 1906. What remains of Borochov today? The Histadrut!